

NATIONAL MARKET COVERAGE

TRANSCRIPT

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SUBJECT EPA SECONDHAND SMOKE REPORT

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BROADCAST EXCERPT

DAN RATHER (ANCHOR): The tobacco lobby has been fighting it for two years, but now the U.S. government is coming out with a study officially concluding that secondhand tobacco smoke causes thousands of cancer deaths a year in non-smokers. This could trigger tougher no-smoking laws all around the country. Health correspondent Edie Magnus has more about the medical and political impact.

EDIE MAGNUS (REPORTER): In a move predicted to have major consequences on where smokers can or cannot light up, William Riley in his last major act as head of the EPA will approve a report classifying secondhand tobacco smoke as a Group A carcinogen, in the same class as such other cancer-causing substances as radon, benzene, and asbestos.

Among the report's conclusions, that secondhand or environmental tobacco smoke causes approximately 3000 lung cancer deaths each year in non-smokers and that it causes an estimated 300,000 lower respiratory tract infections each year in children, including cases of pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma, as well as middle ear disorders.

MORTON LIPPMANN (CHMN, EPA SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD): This document is the first definitive report of these effects in children.

DR. ALFRED MUNZER (COALITION ON SMOKING OR HEALTH): We hope that this report will provide an impetus for state and local governments to limit smoking in all public places, particularly schools and day care centers.

MAGNUS: It's a bombshell not unexpected by the tobacco lobby, who today accused the EPA of endorsing a flawed analysis to support a politically correct position.

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BRENNAN DAWSON (TOBACCO INST): The EPA has not included all of the studies, the studies that it has included it has looked at in a very unorthodox manner, and it has been very biased from the beginning.

MAGNUS: Nevertheless, anti-smoking advocates say classifying passive smoke as hazardous will lead to further restrictions on smokers.

AHRON LEICHTMAN (CITIZENS FOR A TOBACCO-FREE SOCIETY): Virtually every public place, whether it's a hotel lobby, a workplace, or a restaurant, will eventually ban smoking for public health reasons.

MAGNUS: That won't happen immediately, but this report could prod the Occupational Safety & Health Administration, which regulates conditions in the workplace, to consider calling on employers to ban smoking on the job. And tomorrow, the American Lung Association will call on the new Congress to pass new laws to address the issue of other people's smoke. Dan?

RATHER: Thanks, Edie.

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